

Message Text

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70

ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

IO-13 OMB-01 SY-05 ACDA-07 OC-06 CCO-00 SAM-01 DHA-02

ORM-02 SCCT-01 USSS-00 /110 W
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R 221315Z JUL 76

FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4063

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

INFO AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON

COMNAVTELCOM WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN

COMIDEASTFOR

NAVCOMMUNIT ASMARA

NAVCOMMSTA NEA MAKRI

CNO WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0577

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PINT ET

SUBJECT: EVENTS IN ERITREA

REF: ASMARA 0571 (DTG 211140Z JUL 76)

1. CONGEN HAS RECEIVED FURTHER INDICATIONS THAT THE SUPPORTERS OF THE DIRG ARE CONSOLIDATING THEIR CONTROL OVER ASMARA AND PUNISHING THE DISSIDENTS. THERE HAVE REPORTEDLY BEEN A TOTAL OF SIX OFFICERS ARRESTED INCLUDING COL. ABERRA, WHO COMMITTED SUICIDE (REFTEL). AMONG THOSE ALLEGED TO HAVE BEEN ARRESTED WERE THE C.O. OF THE PARACHUTE BATTALION, AND SEVERAL OFFICERS OF THE 35TH BN. THERE ARE RUMORS THAT THESE FIVE HAVE BEEN QUIETLY EXECUTED.

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THE PARACHUTE BN IS REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN SENT TO ADI UGRI (MANDEFERA)

DURING THE WEEK. IN FACT, PARATROOPER RED BERETS HAVE NOT BEEN IN EVIDENCE IN TOWN OR AT 2ND DIV HQ SINCE LATE LAST WEEK.

2. RADIO ASMARA REMAINS OFF THE AIR, STILL ALLEGEDLY FOR TECHNICAL REASONS. A PLAUSIBLE EXPLANATION WHICH IS NOW PREVALENT IS THAT SUPPORTERS OF THE DIRG SEIZED AND HID AN ESSENTIAL PIECE OF TRANSMITTING EQUIPMENT TO PRECLUDE THE DISSIDENTS FROM BROADCASTING THEIR VIEWS.

3. THE TACIT TRUCE IN THE ASMARA AREA BETWEEN THE INSURGENTS AND THE ETHIOPIAN MILITARY WHICH BEGAN AFTER THE DEATH OF GETACHEW STILL APPEARS TO BE HOLDING. WHILE INTENSE MILITARY ACTIVITY IS UNDERWAY IN THE KEREN AREA (SEPTEL), THERE HAVE BEEN NO INSURGENT MILITARY INITIATIVES AGAINST ASMARA OR AGAINST THE CONVOYS TO AND FROM MASSAWA. THERE WAS, HOWEVER, A DAYLIGHT RAID ON A PHARMACEUTICAL WHOLESALER IN ASMARA AT 1500 HOURS JULY 19. ABOUT TEN GUNMEN, CLAIMING TO BE INSURGENTS, ROBBED THE KRUSWELL PHARMACEUTICAL IMPORT FIRM, TOOK A VARIETY OF PRESCRIPTION MEDICINES, SPLINTS AND BANDAGES, AND FLED IN THE MANAGER'S CAR. THIS RAID WAS ONE MORE IN A SERIES OF INSURGENT ROBBERIES OF DRUG COMPANIES TO OBTAIN OBVIOUSLY MUCH-NEEDED MEDICAL SUPPLIES.
SLUTZ

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